

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 8, 2013
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 21, 2013
CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2013–14 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 998

Introduced by Assembly Member Members Fong and Atkins
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Atkins)

February 22, 2013

An act to add Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 8260) to Division 8 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, relating to homelessness.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 998, as amended, Fong. ~~Elderly and dependent adults: civil actions.~~ *Homelessness: Interagency Council on Homelessness.*

Under existing law, several agencies have prescribed responsibilities relating to homeless persons.

This bill would create the California Interagency Council on Homelessness. This bill would provide that the council be composed of specified members and would authorize the council to perform various duties, including providing a state plan to ~~end~~ *respond to* homelessness. This bill would authorize the council to seek all available federal funding for purposes of funding the council and its activities.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes.
State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

- 1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the
2 following:

1 (a) California has the highest rate of homelessness and the
2 highest ratio of homeless people per resident, with 135,000 people
3 sleeping on the streets or in shelters on any given night.

4 (b) Homelessness is traumatic for those who suffer it, often
5 leading to separated families, exacerbation of health conditions, a
6 rise in avoidable emergency room use, social and academic delays
7 among children, and greater likelihood of incarceration.

8 (c) Many people who lack permanent shelter and the ability to
9 access regular support ricochet through separate and expensive
10 public systems: overburdened corrections systems, overcrowded
11 hospital emergency rooms, mental health programs, substance
12 abuse treatment and detox facilities, shelters, and emergency
13 housing. As a result, people experiencing chronic homelessness
14 use a disproportionate share of state and local services.

15 (d) Innovative approaches across the nation and within
16 California show promise for reducing homelessness and the
17 resulting impact on state services.

18 (e) Changing the system and reducing homelessness requires
19 coordination and cooperation among federal, state, and local
20 governments, as well as private sector organizations.

21 (f) Creation of a statewide coordinating council is an important
22 and effective tool in supporting initiatives to end homelessness in
23 California.

24 (g) Creation of a statewide coordinating council will stem
25 avoidable costs of maintaining the number of homeless persons
26 and will, therefore, result in reducing avoidable costs to multiple
27 programs.

28 (h) Homelessness affects multiple systems in California at a
29 very high public cost, including housing, mental health and
30 substance abuse, education, corrections, foster care, health care,
31 and veterans services. Reducing homelessness would produce cost
32 savings for all these systems. The state adopted a Ten-Year Chronic
33 Homelessness Action Plan in February 2010, but has no mechanism
34 in place to assess progress or hold state agencies accountable to
35 the action steps in the plan. A codified, structured interagency
36 council on homelessness would help fill this gap.

37 (i) In November 2005, Governor Schwarzenegger created the
38 Governor's Chronic Homelessness Initiative, which included plans
39 to form an interagency coordinating council to reduce
40 homelessness. The Business, Transportation and Housing Agency's

1 2005–10 Consolidated Plan further indicates the importance of an
2 interagency council on homelessness. Despite these intentions, a
3 council has not met regularly or publicly since the Governor
4 adopted his Chronic Homelessness Initiative.

5 (j) California must give priority to developing consolidated,
6 coordinated, and cooperative approaches to issues of homelessness,
7 including, but not limited to, specific issues addressing homeless
8 youth, families, veterans, parolees, victims of domestic violence,
9 people with mental health and substance use disorders, people
10 experiencing chronic homelessness, seniors, and disabled people.

11 (k) Working within current costs, a revitalized Interagency
12 Council on Homelessness will reduce duplication of efforts and
13 the costs of homelessness and will redirect resources to more
14 effective approaches, developing a more integrated system and
15 eliminating fragmentation. Other states have created interagency
16 councils without initial investment of resources.

17 (l) California is not accessing all of the federal funds for
18 homelessness that it should due to a lack of coordination among
19 some agencies. For example, 30 other states apply for funds
20 through the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
21 programs. Application for these funds could total millions of
22 dollars, and requires state agency collaboration.

23 SEC. 2. Chapter 7 (commencing with Section 8260) is added
24 to Division 8 of the Welfare and Institutions Code, to read:

25
26 CHAPTER 7. CALIFORNIA INTERAGENCY COUNCIL ON
27 HOMELESSNESS
28

29 8260. For purposes of this chapter, the following definitions
30 shall apply:

31 (a) “Council” means the California Interagency Council on
32 Homelessness.

33 (b) “Stakeholder organization” means a nonprofit or faith-based
34 organization whose primary mission is to prevent or end
35 homelessness, to provide services or health care to people who are
36 homeless, or to create housing for people who are homeless.

37 8261. (a) There is hereby created in state government the
38 California Interagency Council on Homelessness with a mission
39 to construct cross-agency and community cooperation in

1 responding to homelessness, and to identify and apply for increased
2 federal funding to respond to homelessness.

3 (b) The Governor shall designate a lead agency or representative
4 from the Governor's staff to direct the work of the council.

5 (c) The council shall seek all available federal funding,
6 including, but not limited to, grant and technical assistance funds
7 under the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42
8 U.S.C. Sec. 11301 et seq.), for purposes of funding the council
9 and its activities.

10 (d) Membership of the council shall include all of the following:

11 (1) At least one representative with decisionmaking authority
12 from each of the following:

13 (A) The Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

14 (B) The Department of Housing and Community Development.

15 (C) The California Health and Human Services Agency.

16 (D) The State Department of Social Services.

17 (E) The Department of Veterans Affairs.

18 (2) Two representatives among local law enforcement, county
19 or city government, or organizations representing these interests.
20 One representative appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules,
21 and one representative appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly.

22 (3) Representatives of two stakeholder organizations, with one
23 to be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the other to
24 be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.

25 (4) Two ~~people~~ *individuals* who have experienced homelessness,
26 with one to be appointed by the Speaker of the Assembly and the
27 other to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules.

28 (e) The council may, at its discretion, invite stakeholders, ~~people~~
29 *individuals* who have experienced homelessness, members of
30 philanthropic communities, and experts to participate in meetings
31 or provide information to the council.

32 (f) The Governor shall appoint a chairperson and vice
33 chairperson from among, or in addition to, the members of the
34 council specified in subdivision (d). Within current costs, the
35 council may establish working groups, task forces, or other
36 structures from within its membership or with outside members
37 to assist it in its work. Working groups, task forces, or other
38 structures established by the council shall determine their own
39 meeting schedules.

1 (g) Members of the council shall serve without compensation,
2 except that consumer representatives shall receive minimal
3 compensation if private funds are available. State funds shall not
4 be used to compensate members of the council.

5 8262. (a) The council shall hold public meetings at least once
6 every quarter.

7 (b) The council may, but is not required to, do all of the
8 following:

9 (1) Act as the lead for coordinating and planning the state's
10 response to homelessness, including identifying federal funding
11 sources and determining how the state should apply for these
12 resources.

13 (2) Engage or accept the services of agency personnel and
14 nonprofit organizations, or employ council staff to operate, manage,
15 or conduct the business of the council, only if these services are
16 provided by private, philanthropic, or other nonstate funding
17 resources available for that purpose or the Legislature makes a
18 future appropriation for that purpose.

19 8263. Except as otherwise provided in this chapter, the council
20 shall operate within the current budget of each department and
21 agency represented. Each department and agency shall cooperate
22 with the council and furnish it with information and assistance that
23 is necessary or useful to further the purposes of this chapter.